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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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STATE FOR PRM/ANE (ANUTZMAN) AND EUR/WE (TSMITH)

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SUBJECT: DUTCH GOVERNMENT INCREASING ASSISTANCE TO IRAQI
REFUGEES IN 2008

REF: STATE 30028

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED; PLEASE HANDLE ACCORDINGLY

¶1. (SBU) Emboffs delivered reftel demarche to Foreign Ministry officials Dirk Jan Wierenga (Iraq desk) and Nelly Blokker (Humanitarian Aid Division). Wierenga stated that the Dutch government and parliament share U.S. concerns for the humanitarian situation of Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), and has called on the European Commission and EU member states to provide support.

¶2. (SBU) The Dutch government is allocating EUR 8 million in direct assistance to Iraqi refugees and IDPs in 2008, doubling its 2007 funding of EUR 4 million. Of this total, EUR 6 million has been earmarked by parliament to assist IDPs in northern Iraq. The remaining EUR 2 million will assist Iraqi refugees in Syria and Jordan; the Dutch government is still deciding through which channels to disburse this tranche.

¶3. (SBU) In addition to this direct funding, the Dutch government makes annual, non-earmarked contributions to international organizations that are active in assisting Iraqi refugees and IDPs. For example, the Dutch government has budgeted EUR 40 million in 2008 for the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) of the UN, and EUR 25 million for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) -- out of a total 2008 humanitarian aid budget of around EUR 200 million.

Gallagher